MANHATTAN OPERA BEGINS

OSCAR HAMMERSTEIN'S THIRD SEASON WELL OPENED.

Maria Labia Makes Her American Debut as Puccini's Roman Singer—"Tosca" Heard Off Broadway for the First Time—Maurice Renaud as "Scarpia."

"The only way to make money in this business," said Alexander Lambert the pianist one day, "is to be Paderewski." The operatic impresario might paraphrase this by saying "The only way to have fun in this business is to be Oscar Hammerstein." He alone can go about with the sacred hat firmly seated above his towering brow, a fragrant cigar (rolled by one of his own machines) in his mouth and singing Tony Pastor's old song, "They Said I Couldn't Do It, But I Did." Or if he is inclined to be blank verse and declamator he can quote "Coriolanus"—"Alone I did it, boy!"

At any rate, despite gloomy predictions, bad business, hard times, prima donnas with sore throats and the opposition of several pages of the Social Register, he opened two years ago his Manhattan Opera House in West Thirty-fourth street, kept it open through two seasons and last night opened it for the third season, like Tody Hamilton's good old circus—"greater, grander, more glorious than ever."

He is not in the opera business to make money, this Hammerstein man, but just because he loves it. If he incidentally chances to make some money he will not throw it away, but just burn it in more opera houses. When he has an opera house in every town and can set out on a one week stand circuit of six months his cup of happiness will be filled to the brim. Meanwhile he is getting what satisfaction he can out of old New York and preparing to give Philadelphia the time of its life.

The Manhattan Opera House was packed to the doors last night. All the seats were occupied, all the boxes glittered just as brilliantly as if they belonged in the famous horse shoe of that other place over in Broadway, and the "standees" were as thick behind the orchestra rail as if Enrico Caruso were about to sing at his customary salary of $12 a second.

The opera was Puccini's "Tosca," wrested from the exclusive control of the Metropolitan and performed off Broadway for the first time. The other novelty was Maria Labia, prima donna, late of the Berlin Opera Comique, heralded here as "Mr. Hammerstein's latest discovery." Public interest also awaited the disclosure of Maurice Renaud's side as about the *Baron Scarpia*. Zenatello as *Caradossi* was also something new, while Gilibert's *Sacristan* was an old friend to old opera goers, but perhaps a new acquaintance to that young circle which Mr. Hammerstein's enterprise has developed.

Everything and everybody was a success. Labia pleased the entire audience, Renaud made even the critics sit up and Zenatello aroused the standers to a frenzy of enthusiastic bravos. Campanini was called out immediately after the first act and appeared looking as usual as if he had lost his entire family, all his friends, and all his money. Mr. Hammerstein dodged a call after this act, but accepted public congratulations after the second. The applause at the conclusion of this, the crucial act of the opera, indicated what the experts would pronounce a first night success.

Impresario Hammerstein has substantial grounds for satisfaction with his initial performance of "Tosca." The opera was well mounted scenically and was conducted with all the skill for which Cleofonte Campanini has made himself noted in this city. That some things went wrong was to be expected. For example the important person who operated the cannon shots in the finale of the first act could not fire them off strictly on the beat of the baton, and the result was that their preponderant noise mastered the directing of Mr. Campanini and threw the whole ensemble out of gear.

The chorus made its entry raggedly and the thing went generally at sixes and sevens. Yet in spite of that Campanini's management of the big crescendo was not without the true effect. To his credit be it noted that he delivered this crescendo so judiciously that all the important part of the soliloquy of *Scarpia* was heard by the audience. Mr. Campanini's management of dynamics was excellent throughout the evening and he made the orchestral tone quality sound better than a close analysis proved it to be.

But of course the chief curiosity was about the impersonations of the principals. Mme. Labia, the newcomer, was kindly welcomed upon her first entrance, but doubtless her reception would have been greater had not exaggerated reports of her personal beauty been industriously scattered abroad. She proved to be a woman of agreeable appearance, but that is as far as homage ought to go. Perhaps her sisters in the audience could have given her some hints on the gentle art of gowning herself becomingly, but this is a matter which may not here be discussed.

Her voice is a serviceable soprano and one that has seen honorable service. It was at its best last night in the medium register, where the tones had resonance and warmth of color. The upper register seemed to be somewhat hard in quality and not perfectly free in delivery. But this may have been due to temporary causes. Her style was well suited to Puccini's music, but in the second act she gave way extravagantly to thet emptation to use half spoken text, and in this utterance her voice was harsh and her style distinctly lacking the aristocracy of *Tosca*.

Her conception of the rôle was that which custom has associated with the opera, but her presentation of her idea failed to reach the highest level of tragic dignity and pathos. It was vigorous and passionate, but not altogether touching. Nevertheless Mme. Labia is a good Italian dramatic soprano, and it is safe to say that she will not fail to please Mr. Hammerstein's patrons in many of the rôles entrusted to her care in the course of the season. She ought to be a very interesting *Carmen*.

Maurice Rénaud made a striking figure of *Scarpia*. It would be idle to say that his voice is equal in power to all the exacting demands of the declamatory music, but yet he sang his measures with so much intelligence, with such insight into their musically dramatic value, with such a fine feeling for the light and shade, that he created the impression of a voca splendor far larger than he really achieved. After all a singer who can make his gifts seem to outdo themselves is an artist to command high praise.

In costume and makeup Mr. Renaud always has something to offer, and last night was no exception. His makeup, even to the aquiline Roman nose, was a study in physiognomy, and as usual the wonderful expressiveness of his eyes filled the theatric mask with life. His acting throughout the important second act was of that high order with which he has made his admirers here familiar. He shared the honors of this act with Mme. Labia and won enthusiastic applause.

Mr. Zenatello made a handsome figure of *Caradossi* and acted with more than his habitual discretion. He sang too with some attempts at refinement of style, though his method of tone production debars him from the more elegant and mellow touches of the singer's art. But his rich and unworn voice is always heard with pleasure and, he too earned his share of the favor of the audience.

Mr. Gilibert has often been seen here in the small rôle of the *Sacristan* in the first act, and indeed it was one of the first parts in which he revealed his finesse in the art of comedy. It is hardly necessary to say that this excellent singing actor has made strides in his profession in recent years, and his *Sacristan* has gained in flexibility of expression.

Mr. Hammerstein again presents to the view of his audience a good looking chorus, which is a rarity in opera. But his chorus can also sing, though in "Tosca" it has little opportunity to show the full measure of its powers. The small rôles in "Tosca" amount to almost nothing, but the police spy, *Spoletta*, can easily be made more characteristic than it was last night.

The performance as a whole went with the right spirit. The note of intensity was not missing and the emotional climaxes were not obliterated. Altogether it was an auspicious opening of the season for the enterprising institution set on its felt by the unaided courage of Oscar Hammerstein.

OUTSIDE THE OPERA HOUSE.

A Long Line of Carriages and a Compact, Orderly Crowd.

There were 180 carriages in line on the Thirty-fifth street side of the Manhattan Opera House for the opening night. A dozen traffic policemen kept them in line. Among the well known persons on hand were Mr. and Mrs. Perry Belmont, August Belmont, Mr. and Mrs. Clarence H. Mackay and with them Miss Anna Sands and Miss Beatrice Mills, Mr. and Mrs. W. Bourke Cockran, Mr. and Mrs. Frederick G. Bourne and their daughter, Mrs. Anson W. Hyde; George C. Boldt, E. H. Weatherbee, Robert Graves, Mr and Mrs. George Gould, Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Untermyer and Mr. and Mrs. Henry Siegel.

Speculators were many and the crowd on the street at 8 o'clock was pretty well pressed together, but there was no disorder. A long line was in evidence for the gallery and another inside for the standing room admissions. The standees included a good many who would like to have had seats if there had been any in sight, but the speculators disposed of the few remaining tickets early and the late comers went in just the same and stood up.

A VAUDEVILLE THRILLER.

"The Submarine" at the Colonial Portrays a Tragedy of the Depths.

"The Submarine," a thirty minute thriller adapted from the French of E. H. Laumann and Paul Oliver, was put on yesterday at the Colonial Theatre, with Frank Mills, lately Olga Nethersole's leading man, in the principal rôle. The play held the audience because of its strangeness and tragic intensity, but there were hisses instead of applause when the curtain dropped.

The scene is in the interior of a submarine torpedo boat, which sustains an accident at an unusual depth. Discipline is forgotten and the frenzy of the men carries the action to the climax. The last moments of the luckless crew are vividly portrayed; the attack of the men on *Commander Leroux* (Frank Mills), through whose addiction to opium and natural recklessness the ctatstrophe takes place, and the final overpowering of all by death. A second scene is tacked on, for no particular reason. In it a bored parson preaches a poor sermon.

Frank Mills was assisted by Schuyler Ladd, Joseph K. Whitmore, Eric Blind and Thomas F. Stuart. The acting was praiseworthy.

NEWS OF PLAYS AND PLAYERS.

Celebrating Schiller's Birthday—Marguerite Clark With Hopper.

Friedrich von Schiller's birthday anniversary will be celebrated to-night at the German Theatre in Irving place with a performance of "Wilhelm Tell."

The Shuberts announced yesterday that Marguerite Clark, the comedienne who has been associated with De Wolf Hopper in musical productions, is soon to appear with Mr. Hopper again. Miss Clark is to play the rôle of *Elvira* in "The Pied Piper," a musical fantasy by Austin Strong and R. H. Burnside; music by Manuel Klein. Miss Clark began rehearsals with Mr. Hopper and the company yesterday. Later in the season Miss Clark, as already announced, will appear as an individual star in a musical play entitled "The Prince and the Pauper," founded on Mark Twain's story.

Herman Montagu Donner, the Anglo-Finnish poet, will deliver an illustrated lecture on Finland in Carnegie Lyceum on Thursday night of this week.

Willie Hoppe, the young billiard expert, is going into vaudeville. He will appear first next Monday in the Fulton Theatre, Brooklyn. Mirrors arranged upon three sides of the billiard table will enable the audience to follow Willie's crack shots. He will describe each play.

CHANGE OF HEART TOO LATE.

Hudson Theatre Manager Couldn't Free Secretary After Causing His Arrest.

Jesse L. Lasky, manager of the Hudson Theatre, after having his private secretary, Perce C. Hassard, arrested yesterday and arraigned in the West Side court charged with grand larceny, asked Magistrate Moss to let the defendant go.

"He is a good young fellow and as he has promised to make restitution I have decided to retain him in my employ," said Lasky.

"I'm very sorry," said the Magistrate, "but he is charged with a felony. I have no discretion in the matter."

Hassard pleaded guilty and was held in $1,500 bail for the Grand Jury. He is 29 years old and lives at 236 West 150th street. On November 5 he received $443.72 which had been expressed by Bert D. Harris from Wilkesbarre, Pa. Lasky asked him for the money yesterday. He opened a box in which he said he had deposited it, but the box was empty. Lasky then called in the police. Hassard admitted having taken the money, $200 of which he had deposited in bank but was unable to account for the rest. Lasky told the Magistrate.

The Seagoers.

Sailing to-day by the North German Lloyd steamship Kaiser Wilhelm II., for Plymouth, Cherbourg and Bremen:

Mrs. Trenor L. Park, Mr. and Mrs. Dewid J. Post, T. Chalkley Palmer, J. M. McCutcheon, Lee Reichmann, Dr. and Mrs. W. F. Schaller, Mrs. H. W. Taft, William W. McFarlane, Mr. and Mrs. Julius Lehman, Mr. and Mrs. Charles S. Francis, W. A. Bostwick, the Rev. E. R. Halpin, Mrs. C. C. Delmonico, the Hon. T. E. Burton and A. C. Case.

Passengers by the Holland-America liner Statendam, for Boulogne and Rotterdam:

Mr. and Mrs. Stanley R. Miller, L. C. Jelles, Miss C. J. Van Heemskerk Duker and Miss Claudia Carter.

MISS BARRYMORE MADE OVER

TRANSFORMED TO ORDER IN A MAUGHAM COMEDY.

"Lady Frederick," by the Author of "Jack Straw," Gives Her the Best Opportunity of Her Career and She Makes the Most of It—Bruce McRae Pleases.

One of the wise gentlemen who write familiar quotations has remarked sapiently that clothes make the woman. So do puffs, of both powder and hair, rouge, lip salve, eyebrow pencils and all the other common and popular aids to nature. W. Somerset Maugham lays down this assertion more or less directly in his play "Lady Frederick," in which Ethel Barrymore appeared at the Hudson Theatre last night, and Miss Barrymore made it all the more convincing by ocular demonstration.

Imagine, please, the radiant Ethel Barrymore put forward in her most unattractive light, with hair scant and frowzy, face pale, even haggard, only to become the radiant one again with a theatreful watching the process. She does just that. The transformation is one of the most interesting scenes in a play which gives her a better opportunity than anything in which she has yet appeared.

Mr. Maugham, whose "Jack Straw," in which John Drew is now appearing, first drew favorable attention to him as a dramatist, wrote "Lady Frederick" in 1904, before "Jack Straw" was thought of. "Lady Frederick" caught on immediately when first produced in London just as it will here, for it is a delightful comedy, skilfully worked out, full of brilliant, snappy dialogue and well drawn characters. The favor which "Jack Straw" has already found and which is sure to follow "Lady Frederick" makes Mr. Maugham a factor to be reckoned with in a discussion of successful present day dramatists.

Lady Frederick, whom Miss Barrymore impersonates with a delicious suggestion of an Irish brogue, is the character on which the story of the play depends. This person is a widow of 35 with a misunderstood past, a captivating present and an inclination to let the future take care of itself. Her income is tiny, but she continues to spend money and live entirely beyond her means because that's the sort of life she's used to and Providence has a way of making things come out all right when the pinch comes.

She owes money lenders thousands of pounds, her modiste hundreds, with no prospect of being able to pay and cheerfully admits retaining her footman in her service "to inspire confidence in tradespeople."

Women know she makes up; they know she gambles; they know she's something of an all around sport and they have heard rumors of incidents in days gone by which make them more than suspicious of her. Even her clothes, stunning as they are, are used as an argument against her. "Clothes never hang well until not a shred of reputation is left," is the way it is expressed in one instance.

So it is not surprising when a youngster of 22 falls madly in love with her and makes that fact apparent his mother should send, post haste, for the boy's uncle and endeavor to break matters off. She tries to convince the youngster that *Lady Frederick* is not a proper person, but the boy prefers to believe the accused woman's explanation and is told to come to her at 10 A. M. the following day for his answer.

He is ushered into her boudoir and talks to her through a closed door until she appears in a dressing gown with her maid ready to complete her toilet before him. Her face is pale and lined, her hair thin and dishevelled—a very different *Lady Frederick* than the one he had seen and known. The morning light adds ten years to her thirty-five or thereabout, and point by point she assumes the "best complexion in Monte Carlo." Hair puffs are adjusted, a switch is exhibited, rouge and powder and lip salve are applied and the winning expression of the eyes comes out after the application of the pencil.

Through it all the lady candidly admits the necessity for all that is going on, awakes in him a realization of the real difference in their ages and makes his retirement easy by refusing him gracefully. She had no idea of marrying him, it develops, but wished to cure him of his infatuation and pretended to oppose his mother's opposition to her on account of the latter's irritating way of bringing matters to a climax. There's more to the plot, of course, but it would be a pity to disclose all of it.

It was apparent before the play was half over that Miss Barrymore was doing the best work of her career. The part called for no action which was not well within her powers. The author made her an Irish girl and Miss Barrymore caught the spirit to a nicety. Her replies, bright in themselves, showed the real touch of blarney as she delivered them and a bit of emotional acting at the end of the second act when she was confronted with apparent evidence of a former misdeed was played in a key of repression entirely consistent with the character.

A comedy scene in which a dressmaker who came determined to collect an overdue bill departed refusing to have the matter mentioned was thoroughly delightful, and a suggestion of forced light heartedness as the young lover was dismissed was excellently conveyed. A dozen curtain calls after each act were the sincere tribute of the audience.

An extremely capable company seconded her efforts. Jessie Millward, as the mother of the infatuated young man, was cordially received and acted in the same finished manner as of old. Bruce McRae too was always human, always convincing. Of the others Charles Hammond, Norman Thorp, Arthur Elliot and Vira Stowe were all acceptable.

Miss Sophia E. Blatchford's Will Filed.

NEWPORT, Nov. 9.—The will of Miss Sophia E. Blatchford of New York, a member of the older social colony of Newport, was admitted to probate to-day. From the will it cannot be told how large the estate is, although it is generally understood that it is large. There is no public bequest, all of the estate going to Francis Hunter Potter, Philip Barton Key Potter and Alice Key Potter, each receiving one-third of the estate on becoming 25 years old.

Letters of administration were granted to Newton Adams of New York.

Loving Cup for Mr. Schieren.

The members of the Hughes Alliance in Brooklyn are planning for a dinner next week in celebration of the Governor's victory. A silver loving cup is to be presented to former Mayor Charles A. Schieren of Brooklyn, who served as chairman of the Alliance.

Hamlin—Terry.

ST. PAUL, Nov. 9.—Conde Hamlin, business manager of the New York *Tribune*, was married at 4 o'clock this afternoon to Miss Pearl A. Terry, literary editor of the *Pioneer Press* of this city. Conde Hamlin was divorced last year from the daughter of former Governor Austin of Minnesota.

PAUL ARMSTRONG'S LATEST.

"Blue Grass" at the Majestic a Racing Play That Wins the Audience.

Even the mob of cubs from Morningside Heights that bought up all the seats in the gallery of the Majestic Theatre last night and did their best to ruin a first night performance grew interested in the story of "Blue Grass," Paul Armstrong's racing drama that Liebler & Co. presented at the Majestic Theatre last night for the first time in New York and quieted down after the play got its stride.

Down stairs the holders of orchestra seats thought of even the annoying mob in the gallery and forgot, too, the presence of Mrs. Edna Goodrich Goodwin and her new husband in a stage box. For, to lapse into the stilted language of the Broadway first nighters, "Blue Grass" is a wallop.

"Blue Grass" from its name down to the smallest pickaninny with a thinking part in the paddock scene is redolent of Kentucky and of the gentleman breeders of the Blue Grass region who go in for racing as such. A major love story, of course, runs through the five scenes of the three acts, and there is a minor love story too. Perhaps even more interesting is the atmosphere of horseflesh at its best and the feel of pounding hoofs and flying dust and cheering crowds in a grand stand.

You know that in every racing play everything depends upon a certain horse and its winnings, and you know that the horse will win. But despite all this Mr. Armstrong has builded his play so well that he dares to have his maiden, Blue Grass, win long before the final two settings of the play are presented to the audience and still sustains interest until the final speech of the last act.

Furthermore, he follows the scene of the winning of the race with another that dispels your fears that Blue Grass's dam, My Lady, the old brood mare, is going to be gathered in by the bad young man from the Northern tracks. Even after all these troubles have been cleared away you still wait expectantly for the last scene, wherein joyful things happen that hold your interest, but of which it would not be fair to go into details here.

"Blue Grass" appeals to big elemental emotions, and therein will lie its popularity. When much of the sentiment has to do with the simple affection of a gray haired darkey, *Old Folks*, for the glistening old mare, My Lady, and when *Old Folks* is played by so splendid a character actor as George Marion there is never any fear in your mind that the sentiment will well over into sentimentality. The scene between *Old Folks* and My Lady, her muzzle thrust through the door of a box stall to listen while *Old Folks* says, "Ah reckon yo' know yo' baby boy is racin' in Looeyville," and a bit later, when *Old Folks* describes the great day when My Lady herself stepped out on a track like paper, "Like she wah 'fraid she'd break it," and then told of the race that My Lady won—her last race it was—brought applause from the audience that in the report of a political convention would be timed with a stop watch.

The situation brought about at the end of the first act wherein old *Melissa* announces what the visitors to *Colonel Taylor's* Kentucky home will have for suppah is one that tickled the big audience mightily, and through it too ran a note of real pathos. In the big scene in the paddock, when the sweating Blue Grass, victorious in the race just run, was led in amid cheers, the art of George Marion's stage management was evident, as it was in evidence throughout the play. Also the curtain to the paddock scene had been led up to artfully by Mr. Armstrong and merited the applause that the audience let loose and which drowned out even the cheers of the howling mob on the stage.

There was a well balanced cast that included besides Mr. Marion Robert McWade, Jr., whose Kentucky accent rang true and who went through his big scenes with a proper reserve, Miss Olive Wyndham, a pretty girl of much charm; Susanne M. Willis, who played the old negro cook; James Seeley, Richie Ling and Norah Lamison.

Perhaps it isn't "nice" even to mention "Society and the Bulldog," at this late date, but Mr. Armstrong needn't give a thought to that again. After "Blue Grass" all is forgiven. Even the anti-racing laws cannot stop "Blue Grass's" steady gallop to success.

BIG PSI U DINNER TO TAFT

By Way of Celebrating the Fraternity's 75th Birthday Anniversary.

The Psi Upsilon fraternity will celebrate the seventy-fifth anniversary of its birth on Tuesday, November 24, with a banquet at the Waldorf-Astoria that promises to be the largest dinner of the winter. John G. Saxe, who is chairman of the dinner committee, estimates that at least 1,000 members of this college fraternity will be present to whoop it up for Psi U and particularly for Judge William H. Taft, a member of the Yale chapter, who is expected to be present.

At the speakers' table will be a distinguished group that will include four Senators of the United States and some of the best oratory that the society can provide. The following letter has just been sent to Judge Taft and the committee confidently expects that he will accept the invitation:

Hon. William H. Taft.

DEAR BROTHER TAFT: On Founders' Day, Tuesday, November 24, 1908, the Psi Upsilon fraternity will celebrate its seventy-fifth anniversary with a banquet at the Waldorf Hotel in New York city, under the management of the executive council of the fraternity and the Psi Upsilon Club of the city of New York.

We herewith tender you an earnest and hearty invitation to be present.

Few fraternities have ever had a seventy-fifth anniversary. No fraternity has ever had a seventy-fifth anniversary during a year in which the American people have elected one of its members to be President of the United States.

In June a sub-committee of three, consisting of Herbert L. Bridgman, president of the council; George S. Coleman, president of the club, and Edward P. Grosvenor, was appointed to secure, if possible, your consent to be present, but they were informed that you could not take the matter up until after election, and we have been hoping and expecting ever since to secure your consent immediately after election.

A few weeks ago we sent the enclosed notice to about 2,000 members of the fraternity in and about New York.

At least a thousand ardent young Psi U.'s, representing, if we may modestly say it, the best and most sturdy element among the young men of the nation, are anxiously awaiting this opportunity to greet and congratulate their illustrious "Big Brother."

We invite you—we beg you to be present.

HERBERT L. BRIDGMAN,
President Executive Council.

GEORGE S. COLEMAN,
President Psi Upsilon Club.

JOHN G. SAXE,
Of the dinner committee.

Ex-Senator John C. Spooner, Dr. George Henry Fox, Ira A. Place, counsel for the New York Central Railroad, and Lawson Purdy are some of the forty or more men who have signed the invitation to Judge Taft. Psi Upsilon is one of the oldest of the college fraternities and representatives of all of its chapters will attend the dinner.

Joseph O'Mara in Philadelphia.

PHILADELPHIA, Nov. 9.—The walls of the old Walnut Street Theatre shook this evening in a demonstration when Joseph O'Mara, the Irish singing artist, made his American premier in the leading rôle of "Peggy Machree," an Irish comedy drama with music, for which O'Mara was especially engaged by Messrs. Brooks and Dingwall. O'Mara in his solo numbers made good the promises which have been coming from the other side. He disclosed a high and clear tenor voice.

ELDRIDGE ST. AT THE PLAY

AND HEARD ITS CHILDREN SPEAK WORDS, OH, SO FINE.

For John Jay Chapman Had Coached Them in His Own Woodland Comedy, Which Sounded Mighty Nice With Its "What He's" and Its "Varlets."

"What ho! my henchmen bold," said Abie Bronstein. "Out into yon orchard-green and fetch hither the poltroon who did urge his nefarious suit upon my daughter in a fashion so unmannerly."

Then up spake Sadie Bodner:

"Hold, brother, let not thy spleen betray thee into unseemly demonstration before these uncouth peasants here nor thy heated blood deny thy gentle birth."

Whereupon Abie's mamma and Sadie's mamma exchanged glances of approval and all of Eldridge street that could be crowded into the assembly hall of the University Settlement last night buzzed applause. For was it not grand to see Abie in periwig and smalls and Sadie in quilted skirt with paniers of flowered brocade walk across a stage and to hear them use such fine, big words? In truth there is no telling what one's children will do after they have begun to go to the school and get learning.

"The Hermits," a play styled a sylvan comedy, which was written by Mr. John Jay Chapman, was the vehicle wherein the new found powers of Abie and Sadie and eighteen other children of Eldridge street could expand. "The Hermits," something like a quaint reminiscence of some forgotten play of Congreve or Wycherley with its stilted dialogue and patent farce, might be a novelty if played in a parlor of an uptown hotel by children brought up by governesses. In the hands of Abie, Sadie and company it was much more than a novelty; it was the newest thing that Eldridge street had seen since the pushcart men formed that Bryan and Levinsky Club down under Williamsburg Bridge two months ago.

A little more than three weeks ago Dr. James Hamilton, who is the head of the University Settlement in Eldridge street, asked Mr. Chapman and his wife to come down and coach some of the children from the neighborhood thereabouts in one of Mr. Chapman's plays. Mr. and Mrs. Chapman came and they began to find children on Eldridge street who could say "What ho, varlet!" without using their hands. Picking out a nucleus of two or three youngsters, the Chapmans, assisted by Miss Brodsky and Mrs. Klein, two of the settlement workers, managed to gather in the full twenty for the cast and another twenty to play on alternate nights. Half of the forty juvenile actors had been born in Russia and all of them had Russian parents. Yet with three weeks of rehearsal and one grand dress rehearsal, which the mammas attended, these youngsters were ready and confident to play to all of Eldridge street last night.

And the street was there. The mammas came with their earrings dangling and their bonnets sparkling with new beads. Came also some of the papas who speak no English but who are tremendously proud of their sons' learning and holding onto their hands Lena and Isaac, Betty and Mosche. The young ones sat next to their parents and translated the programmes into Yiddish for their benefit.

When the green curtains of the stage were drawn aside to a grand flourish of the piano there sat Harry Schechter in a brown robe with a cowl. The programme said that Harry was *Francesco the Hermit*. A hermit is a new thing for Eldridge street, and the cowl and girdled robe—that looked like some of the pictures in Christian books—looked bad. But Harry was such an amusing boy, even in a gown. He spoke a great many fine words, waved his arms about like a real actor and when he walked he walked real slow and dignified. Oh, yes, but Harry was a fine actor.

Then when in came Louis Spivak in another of those robes and he and Harry had a fight with swords, wasn't that clever of those two jungers? Said Harry then:

"I' faith, in no land have I met one so pretty a swordsman. Thy blade dost cleave the air like a swallow's wing and no man can stand in the way of it and breathe again."

Before Louis could twirl that mighty sword about his head in further proof of its potency Charley Weiss, who played *Lubin*, a young swain, set the house into laughter by his appearance in sky blue satin jerkin, white stockings and with a ring of stiff flaxen curls crowning his head. Eldridge street does not know a swain, but it knows little Charley Weiss. When Charley answered questions put to him by Harry Schechter and Louis Spivak in a tremulous falsetto, keeping his face perfectly blank the while, the audience set him down as being the funniest actor of all.

In the second act the girls had a chance. Pauline Weiss, pretty and demure, stepped to the edge of the table set centre stage, which represented a wayside inn, and clasped her hands soulfully. She asked the audience why it was that her faithless lover should desert her and ne'er send token of his burning affection. Only Pauline said "lofer," and she swung into the chanting, complaining crescendo that means animation in Eldridge street. Gussie Friedman, very like a Dresden china shepherdess in her flounced skirt and her high heeled slippers, came immediately to the rescue of the languishing Pauline with a stage letter from the faithless one.

So went the fortunes of the mummers Charley, Harry, Louis and the rest. Without a break and almost without a mispronounced word they carried the three acts of the strangely foreign sylvan comedy to a final curtain wildly applauded. Then they took off their wigs and flowered brocades and went with papa and mamma to homes in swarming tenements.